

DISCOVER YOUR SUFFOLK COUNTY PARKS

Emergencies - 911
General Information - 854-4949

Birdwatching

Southaven Park is a popular spot for birdwatching, especially in the winter because of the abundant waterfowl.

Horseback Riding

Bring your own horse and enjoy the trails that meander through the park, permit required.

Fishing and Hunting

Freshwater fishing for trout, bass and perch is available along the Carman's River, in the lake and the pond. A New York State fishing license is required and all persons must register at the Boat House. Waterfowl hunters may use sites along the east side of the river in season.

Canoeing and Rowboating

Canoeists along the Carman's River often pass through Southaven Park, however all canoeists must check in at rowboat area before launching. Rowboats can be rented at the park for those who want to relax on the waters of Hard's lake.

Hiking

The Brookhaven Trail, a footpath that, when completed, will run from shore to shore in Central Brookhaven traverses the park.

Camping

There are 130 campsites available for individuals and reserved groups. Full sanitary facilities. Call 854-1418 for information.

Picnicking

Over 1000 people can fit into the large picnic field and there are an additional 22 group picnic areas.



A MESSAGE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEVE LEVY

Dear Suffolk Resident,

The Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation manages over 48,000 acres of parkland. Each park facility provides a variety of recreational opportunities and its own unique setting for all to enjoy.

At Southaven County Park, visitors can enjoy nature at its best while camping, fishing, boating, hunting, picnicking, horseback riding, or hiking. In addition, this 1,356 acre park offers rides aboard miniature trains along tracks maintained by the LI Steamers.

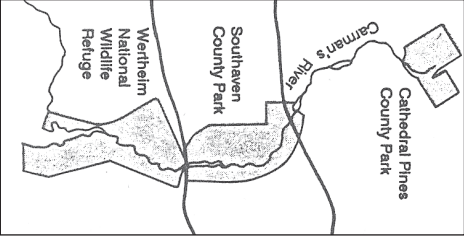
This brochure will provide you with a map and history of the park. You can see for yourself how the natural resources that exist at Southaven have enticed visitors and naturalists for generations.



Suffolk County Parks Southaven County Park

Southaven County Park

“*Along the Carman's River*”

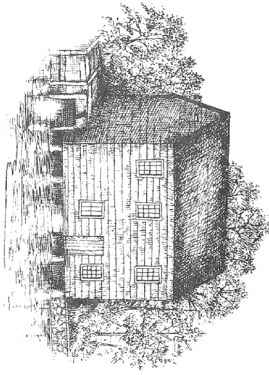


Beginning as a small stream in Middle Island, the Carman's River flows southward to the eastern end of the Great South Bay. This river, once known as the Connecticut River, winds through the Pitch Pine - Oak woodlands of central Suffolk, yet the vegetation in the wetlands along its banks is different from the open Pine Barrens of the upland areas. Red Maples grow in moister places closer to the river and the thick shrub layer along the banks includes the sweetly perfumed Sweet Pepper Bush and tasty High Bush Blueberries. Deer browse the vegetation and red fox hunt small mammals in the upland areas, while the lower part of the river provides a haven for migrating and wintering waterfowl.

People have always been attracted to rivers and the Carman's is no exception.

Evidence indicates that native Americans camped and hunted in this area. Later, the shape of the river itself was changed as people settled at several points along its course.

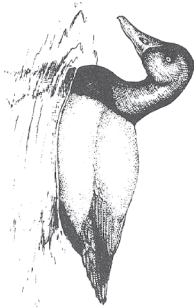
In the mid 1700's dams were built in three places and mills constructed below the mill ponds. Upper Lake and Lower Lake in Yaphank are mill ponds as is Hard's Lake further south. In the northernmost section of



Southaven Park, north of the Long Island Expressway, are some of the remains what was once known as Millville. Some of the buildings still stand although the mills built by the Homan family and later owned by the Gerards are long gone.

Mordecai Homan built a saw mill, a grist mill and a fulling mill (for shrinking and thickening wool) just north of the “goin’ over” -- the ford about where Montauk Highway is now. These mills changed hands several times coming back to other Homans and then to Samuel Carman who married into the Homan family. Samuel Carman, Jr. ran a tavern in part of his large house which, in the early 19th century, was a stage stop on the

route from Brooklyn to Easthampton. The South Haven or Carman's Mills operated until 1910 and the mill stood until 1958 when Sunrise Highway was extended through the area. At that time a new dam was constructed north of the new highway and the historic South Haven church was moved to Brookhaven.



The large trout in the Carman's River were a draw for some notable fisherman. In 1827 Daniel Webster rented some land above the South Haven mill pond with fishing rights for himself and a few friends, including Martin Van Buren, later the 8th president. This was the forerunner of the Suffolk Club organized by August Belmont in 1858. The Suffolk Club bought a 1500 acre shooting and fishing preserve and raised trout to stock the river. Theodore Roosevelt was one of the Club's most famous members. Finally, Anson Hard bought up all the other shares and used the area as a private hunting preserve, raising pheasants and keeping a herd of European Sika deer.

Today, people hike and canoe along the river, picnic and camp, hunt and fish, ride horses on upland trails and row boats in the mill pond. Now that Southaven is a county park all Suffolk residents can respond to the lure of the

Well-known

Figures Along the Carman's River

In late 1780 Benjamin Tallmadge told General George Washington that he would like to cross the Long Island Sound from Connecticut to destroy a British supply collection point at Coram and while on Long Island raid the British occupied Fort St. George (St. George's Manor). Tallmadge and his company of 80 men landed at what is now Mt. Sinai and marched south along the east side of the Carman's River to St. George's Manor where they captured 54 prisoners. While most of the company marched the prisoners back to their boats, Tallmadge took a small group to Coram to destroy the British supplies.

Daniel Webster occasionally came to fish in the Carman's River. One well-known tale has it that in the spring of 1827 Webster was staying at Carman's tavern in South Haven and attended the Sunday morning service across the street in the South Haven Presbyterian Church. During Rev. Ezra King's sermon, Carman's boatman slipped into the church and whispered to Carman and Webster who promptly tiptoed out. Knowing what was up, other worshippers began to get up and leave. Finally, the Rev. Ezra King, himself an ardent fisherman, stopped preaching, pronounced the benediction and went off to the river with the others to watch Webster bring in his long sought quarry -- a 14 1/2 pound trout. The outline of the fish was traced on Carman's tavern and the next day the shape (but 1/3 larger) was transferred to wood and cut out to create a weathervane for the church. Webster was so pleased with his visit that shortly thereafter he rented land along the Carman's River.



Guidelines for park visitors

Suffolk County parks are for the use of residents of Suffolk County and their guests.

Please do not disturb the plants and animals.

Please keep your dogs on a leash at all times.

You may not bring in alcoholic beverages except with a permit.

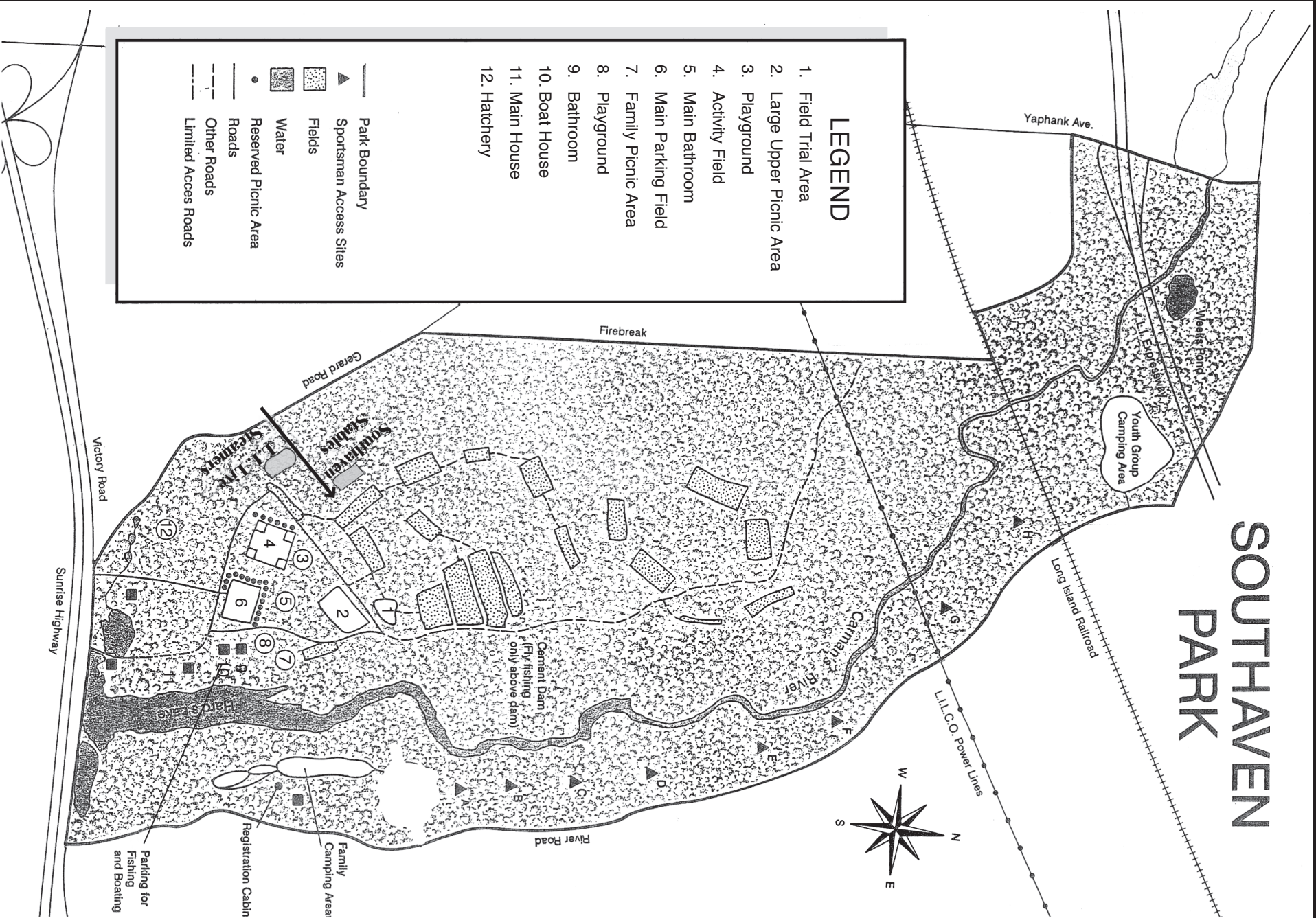
Please carry your waste out with you or use the trash receptacles provided.

No Swimming.

Please obey all traffic signs.

For further information, request a brochure on park rules and regulations.

SOUTHAVEN PARK



Along the River

Just a few yards away from the river sandy trails pass through low huckleberries and thin pines. But that narrow band along the river is quite a different world.

The moist soil supports several shrubs that have sweetly fragrant flowers in the spring and summer. Soft green mosses grow at the base of trees that lean out over the water. In early autumn the leaves on the trees lining the river banks begin turning bright red.

A curious clapping noise over the river turns out to be a swan's wings hitting the water as it takes off. Further upstream even a quiet approach to the river's edge may cause a series of "plops" as frogs or turtles jump into the water.

In quiet spots along the river bank circles that look like rain drops hitting the water are actually caused by water striders -- insects -- skating on the surface. Their dark bodies and long legs are nearly invisible against the shady, dark water. A flash of sunlight illuminates little golden-brown dragonflies cruising low over the water in search of mosquitoes to eat.

The river's edge is a narrow strip with some of Long Island's most exciting sensory experiences.